TACK
NNEX
5
060
751

Classroom Practice in Design

JAMES PARTON HANEY

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

ornia
al

Classroom Practice In Design

JAMES PARTON HANEY

THE MANUAL ARTS PRESS
PEORIA, ILLINOIS

COPYRIGHT,
JAMES P. HANEY
1907

CLASSROOM PRACTICE IN DESIGN

JAMES PARTON HANEY

ANY discussion of classroom practice in applied design naturally divides itself into a consideration of the problems to be solved and the methods to be employed in solving them. The sequence of problems constitutes what is familiarly known as the course of study, and to the principles which underlie such a 'course' attention must first be directed. These principles may be stated as follows: (1) The designs made must be for use. (2) The forms decorated must admit decoration. (3) The designs must be based on structure. (4) Their treatment must be conditioned by material. (5) They must permit individual interpretation. (6) Each problem in the sequence should develop through a similar series of steps with increasing complexity in the relations of the elements employed.

THE DESIGN MUST BE FOR USE

All designs made should be for use. This principle is the first and most important consideration in the teaching of applied design to young students. When design is taught as a series of abstract patterns, or when problems are developed which are not applied, but remain "paper" patterns, the work is taken out of the realm of the real and becomes a mere school exercise. In this guise it is robbed of half its interest, and more than half its value. Until the pupil is brought into contact with the form to be decorated the real problem of design is not presented.

Teachers whose habit it is to teach design through formal exercises are frequently astonished and discouraged to see their pupils who have been schooled in abstract principles, work out for their own delectation wierd naturalistic decorations for pillows, tidies, book-covers and box-tops, in fancy stitch or pyrographic line. Dismay is felt that previous teachings have made so little impression, but the truth is they have not been teachings. The school work has not been real work. The design taught has not been seen by the pupil as a real design, but only as school design to be done and laid aside without a thought, when one comes to decorate something one really wishes to be "fine" or "pretty."

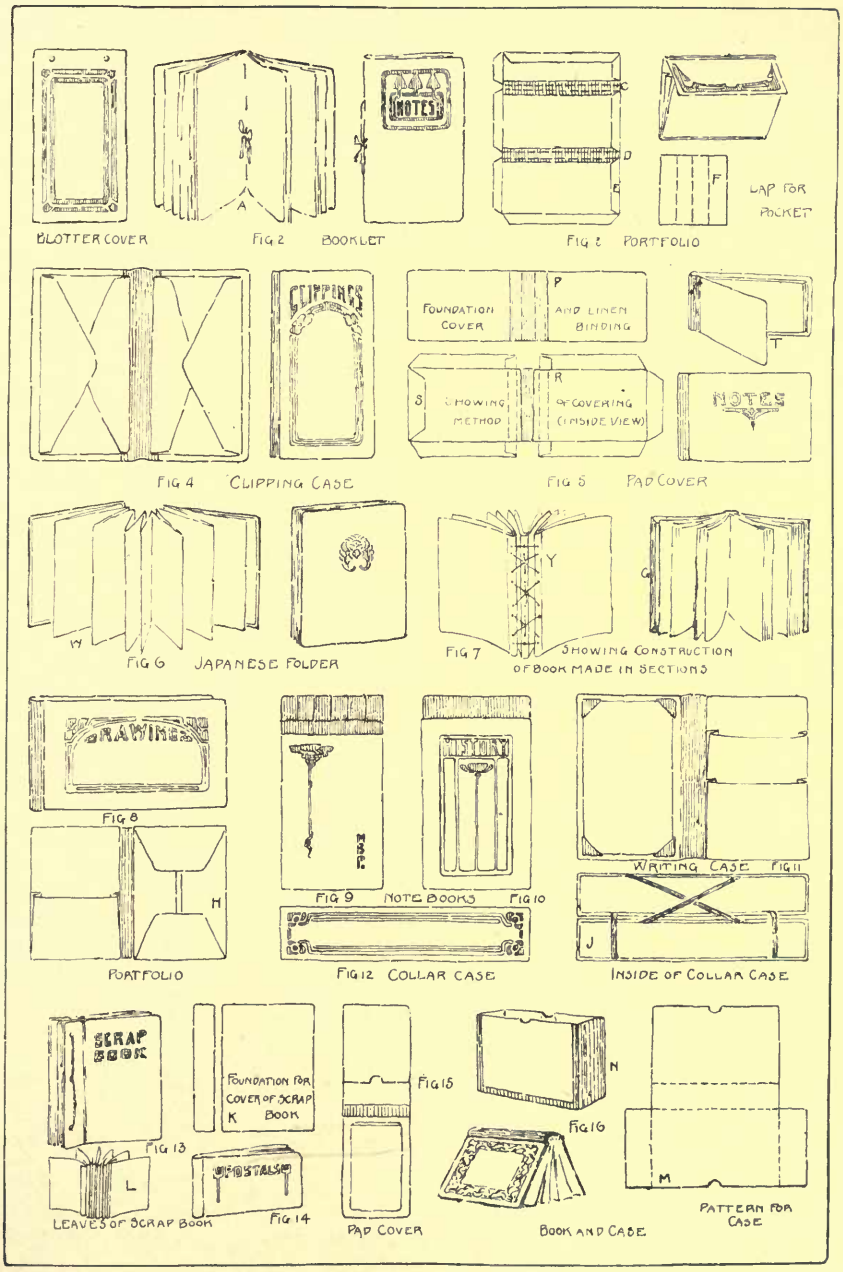
2065676

The moral of this is evident. Design is an agent chiefly of value for the teaching of taste, and taste is not to be taught as an abstraction. It must be developed as a power to discriminate between things good and bad, as they surround us in our daily life. The lessons through which it is taught must be lessons dealing with concrete models, and the decorations made, must be seen as essential to the success of the forms decorated.

Some teachers object to this approach because they feel that so few designs may be made for actual application that their work, if limited to these, would be hampered and restricted. Such would prefer to have the whole field of the Arts—cabinet-making, iron-smithing, textile weaving, and the like—in which to roam with their tyros. This objection is short-sighted. Any careful scrutiny of classroom conveniences, of forms made in school workshops, or commonly devised for gifts at holiday-time, will soon convince one that in these objects there is opportunity to teach the principles of design, in problems much more significant to the child than cabinets, gates, weaves, and wall papers, never to be developed further than the paper on which they are drawn.

To make the teaching of design live teaching, it must rise from life. The course of study should condition the difficulty of each pattern, but necessity should determine the thing for which the pattern is made. That thing when furnished should play a real part in the life of the maker. School designs, like designs made out of school, should rise from necessity, and disappear—worn out—in use. The teacher who fails to see this must always fail to secure vitality in his work. Though the finding of suitable problems may at times offer some difficulty, it is his very business to discover them, and to lead to them by natural paths.

The most satisfactory conditions are present when the work in construction and design can proceed hand in hand, the earlier exercises in 'making' taking the form of useful models in paper, cardboard, textiles, leather, or thin metal, and the later in wood, in clay or in forms of book-binding. But many schools have no course in constructive work. Under such circumstances it will be necessary to develop forms to be decorated out of paper or cardboard. A number may be so made, as the program cover, honor roll, menu, book-plate, class motto, book-cover, book-mark, portfolio, poster, invitation card, decorative shield for the school festival, etc. Other objects, as doilies, mats, curtains, table covers, etc., may be very simply made of linen, canvas, denim or other textile. More advanced types of models suitable for decoration are shown in Fig. 1. Simple shop work models suitable for decoration are



By J. C. Cremins

FIG. I.

shown in Fig. 2. Attention is called to the very simple forms of the designs applied to them.

FORMS DECORATED MUST ADMIT DECORATION

Not all constructed forms may be decorated with propriety. In general it may be said that only those may be so treated which themselves serve a decorative purpose. The use to which the model is to be put controls in large measure its decoration, for all decoration must be subordinate to utility.

Decoration is for interest's sake, but when added, it should serve to increase interest legitimately, without making an exaggerated plea for attention. The enrichment should seek to catch and charm the eye by play of light and shade of color, by harmonious masses and quaint conceits of pattern. The form decorated must not war with its surroundings. The paper-knife which is to lie upon the drawing room table may have its handle carved or inlaid, while the handle of the kitchen knife should be devoid of ornament, that it might be readily cleansed. The kitchen box to hold salt or spices should be of the plainest description, while the library rack to hold paper may, in keeping with its surroundings, be soberly enriched.

Included in the list of forms which may be properly decorated under the conditions stated above, are various shapes and sizes of posters, mottoes, cards, covers, doilies, bags, pillows, books, portfolios, cases, boxes, racks, brackets, frames, trays, stands, etc. Some of these forms may be made of cardboard, some of textile, some of wood or metal. The box is a type. It may be made of heavy paper, or of cardboard covered with textile, or of wood or metal. Its design may be a simple decoration of lines or straps, or an elaborate pattern in repousse or carving. As it may thus be made to serve in various situations as a basis for applied design, so many of the other forms suggested may be adapted to the needs of different classes.

WHEN NOT TO DECORATE

In general it may be said that the lowly form, or one subjected to constant use, to wear and soil, should not be decorated. The following, sometimes selected by class teachers, are therefore better undecorated: Foot-stool, knife-box, flower-stick, string-winder, key-tag, etc. The question as to the part it is to play—its use or function—is the one determining whether a form is to be decorated or not. The object whose function it is to be interesting and attractive may have such interest en-

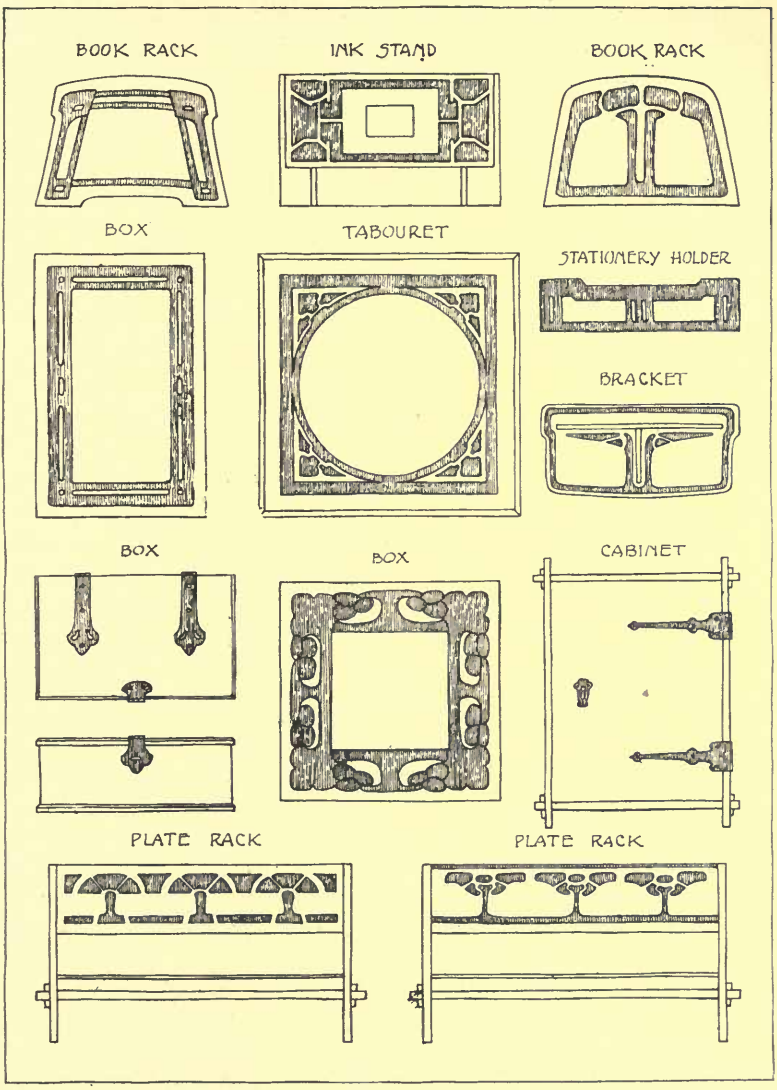

BOOK RACK
INK STAND
BOOK RACK
BOX
TABOURET
STATIONERY HOLDER
BRACKET
BOX
BOX
CABINET
PLATE RACK
PLATE RACK

FIG. 2.

hanced by applied pattern; that which plays the part of a drudge, one soiled by constant handling may, indeed, should be good in its proportions, but unadorned by fret or arabesque.

THE EXTENT OF DECORATION

Over decoration is more to be feared than under decoration. There should be a reserve in every applied design. It should not make an insistent call for attention by huge growths, eye-wearying interlaces, or a twinkling chequer of lights and darks. There is a beauty in quiet spaces. The effort should be to secure the minimum of pattern which will suffice to make the form interesting and save it from the charge of being "empty."

There need be little fear of making a design "too simple:" the less involved it is, the more the fine relations of lines and spaces stand out. That pattern which consists merely of a strap or two emphasizing the outline of a square, and blossoming here and there into a flower or fret, will tax the skill of the best pupils. The use of the "strap" as a decorative element, is, by the way, much to be commended. It serves to accent edges and develops equally well into formal fret or conventionalized leaf or flower. Patterns so devised may be incised, carved, stained, or treated with any special tool. They are useful on wood, textile, clay or metal, and form one of the most serviceable and appropriate types of design which may be developed in the classroom.

APPLIED DESIGN MUST BE BASED ON STRUCTURE

The structural elements of the form decorated should always appear as the basis of the decoration. The design should be seen to rise out of the structure, the model appearing to demand the decoration, rather than to exist merely for the sake of being decorated. The decoration should serve to give structural emphasis to the form; boundary lines should be strengthened by it, and corners supported. Each model should be carefully considered from the standpoint of structure, and joints, edges, feet, locks, hinges—all those things which particularly characterize it—should be examined to see which offer the greatest advantages as points of force, "start" or "growth" points, from which the pattern may spring.

It must be the effort to make the decoration appear as an intrinsic part of the model. The form itself must condition the design and such design must not take precedence over the function of the object. The latter must still declare itself, rack, mat, or box-top. The design must

support and strengthen the idea of function while it serves to create a greater interest in the surface on which it is placed.

The illustrations of this law are various. The plan of a design for a book-cover may, for instance, be gotton from the stitches which hold the leaves together (Fig. 8), that for a box from the edges, feet and lock escutcheon of the model (Fig. 9). Racks which stand, may properly have the design rise from the points on which the pressure comes. while forms which are to hang should have their pendant quality made plain.

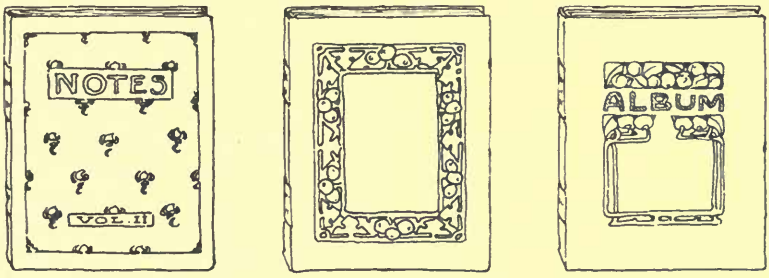


FIG. 3

Others which are to enclose a space, as dishes, trays, etc., may have this holding quality indicated, the pattern aiding, as the sides of the form itself, to contain the things within. The portfolio held together by metallic fasteners may have the design spring from such points, while the closet door hung on hinges may have the latter extend into ornamental bands that divide the door into interesting spaces and call attention to the points which support the form itself. (See Fig. 4, 5, 6.)

No part of the development of applied-design calls for more attention than the question of structure. To be in a position to guide pupils aright, the teacher must learn to see all forms in terms of structure, and must call upon his class to interpret and reinterpret models in great variety, in such terms. Applied design must, in its teaching, be based upon a power of analysis, a power of dissecting constructive elements and of supporting them with motifs, which display the structural excellence of the model they seek to decorate.

It is to be remembered, however, that no one pattern exhausts the decorative possibilities of any given form. Constructed forms possess divers structural elements, some of which may be emphasized by one

pattern, some by another. A book-cover may thus have its back or binding quality developed in one design, (Fig. 8), its edges and corners strengthened in another, or the oblong nature of the surface treated in a variety of ways in others still. (Fig. 3). Yet all of these designs may be in perfect structural propriety.

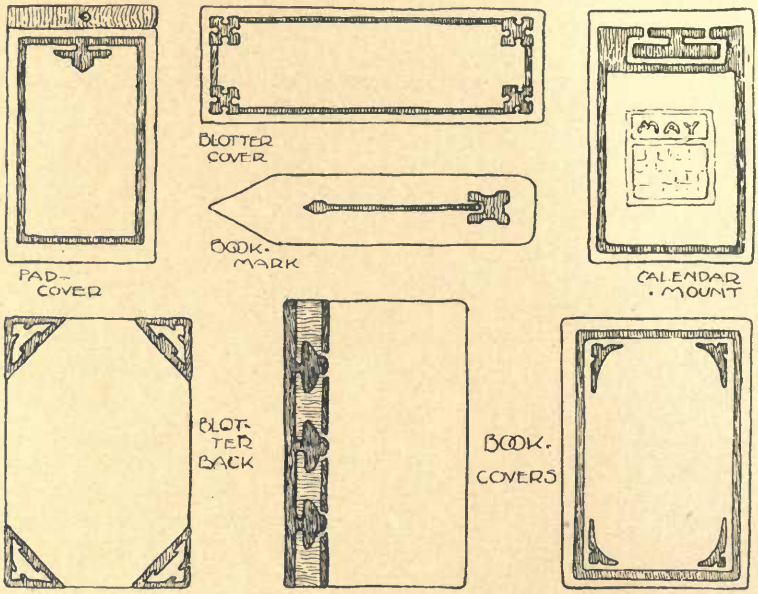


FIG. 4.

That pupils may be led to appreciate the truth of the foregoing statement, it is well, in practice, to consider various possible methods of decorating any given form, basing each design upon a different characteristic of its function and structure. It will also be of advantage to require the young designers now and again, to plan or sketch without assistance a variety of suitable patterns for some form they have not previously considered. Their designs they should then be required to explain and defend agreeable to the law of structure. The habit of self-criticism thus developed forms one of the best methods of learning what makes for sound practice.

Where the models decorated differ in the material of which they are constructed, the applied patterns must also differ in their treatment. The finer and smoother the texture of the material, the more delicate must be the elements of the design. A coarse surface, as canvas or bur-

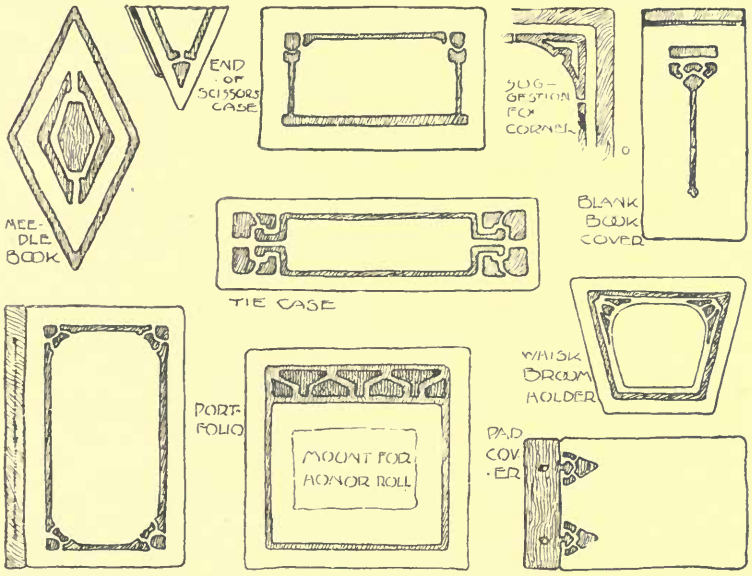


FIG. 5.

lap, necessitates, a broad and simple treatment, while the denser and more resistant surface of metal or of leather, must have its design planned with consideration for the light and shade produced by the tooling.

Natural beauty of texture must not be destroyed by the decoration. Applied stains should thus serve in the case of wooden models to bring out the grain and not to conceal it. Large designs and those which are to carry some distance, as borders for tableclothes, piano covers, curtains, etc., will as a rule require simple, yet forceful treatment with masses of good size, and strong connecting lines. (See Fig. 22).

So far as possible, a course in applied design should include work in more than one material. No one can truly be said to have a knowledge of the subject until he has come into contact with a variety of textures, and has learned the limitations which texture enjoins upon pattern. No

design can be transferred unchanged from one material to another; each translation must see a re-adaption made necessary by the new material.

PROBLEMS MUST PERMIT INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATION

This principal, it would seem, might almost go without saying, yet a word relative to it may not be amiss. It is in the possibility of making

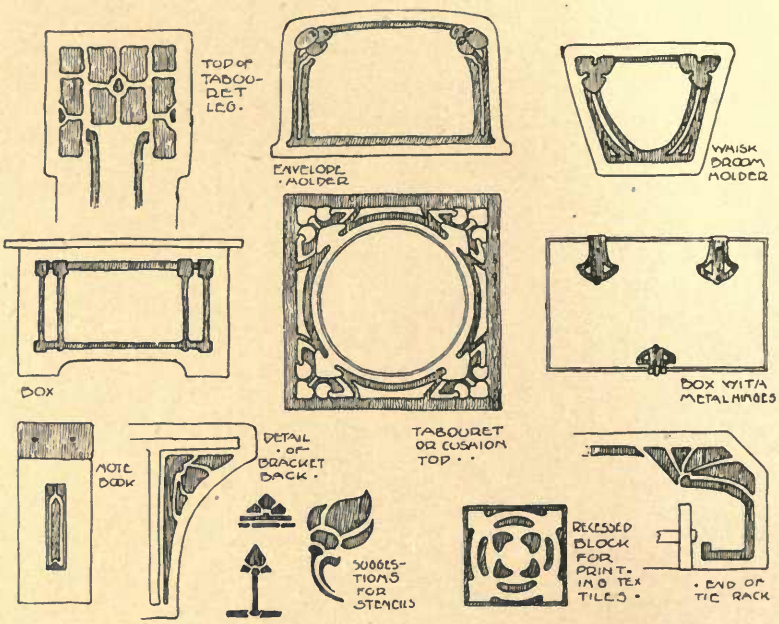


FIG. 6.

each pattern the designer's own that one of the chief advantages of the subject appears. It is through failure properly to govern this personal element that one of the chief difficulties in teaching is experienced.

All problems offered should aim to present the elements to be modified in very conservative and carefully considered fashion. · In the. earliest exercises, the personal equation should play a restricted part. Only one or two lines or spaces should offer for modification and the solution of the problem should turn upon the treatment of such line or space. As the pupil progresses, he is to be allowed more and more latitude until he finally determines the size, shape and arrangement of spaces and their development into conventionalized forms of more or less complexity.

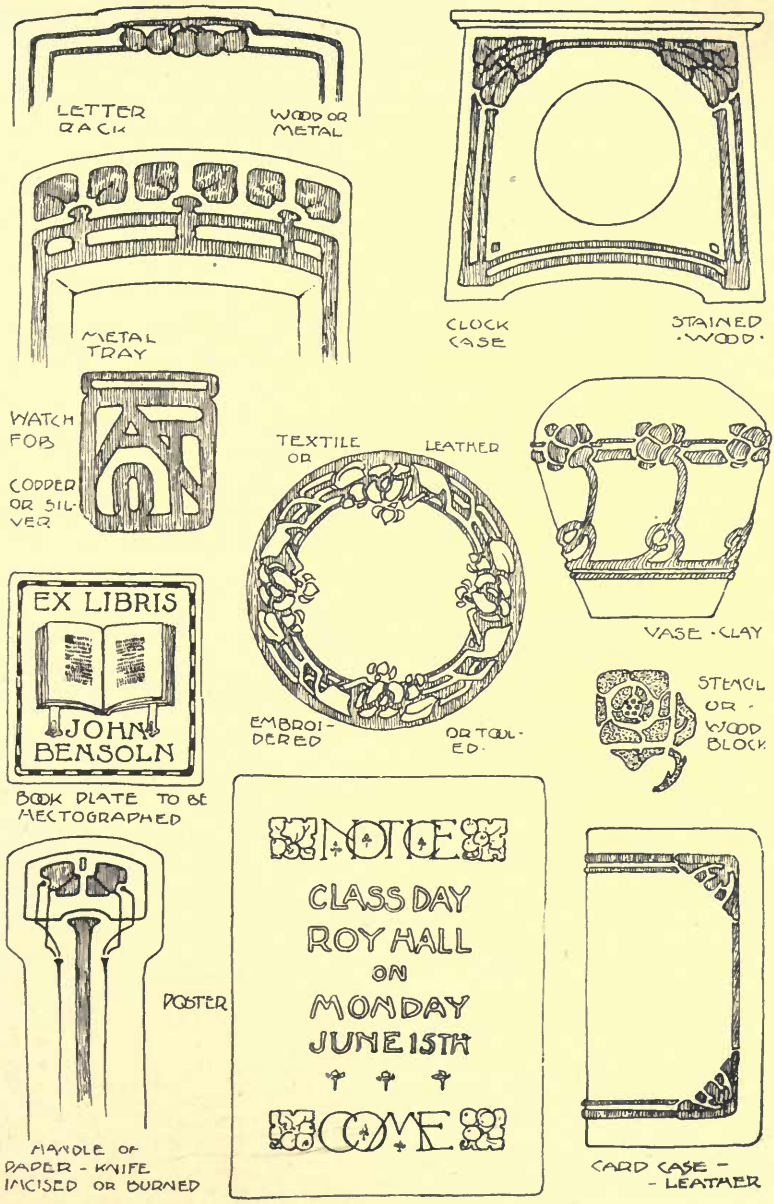

LETTER RACK
WOOD OR METAL
METAL TRAY
CLOCK CASE
STAINED WOOD
WATCH FOB
COPPER OR SILVER
TEXTILE OR
LEATHER
EMBROIDERED
OR TOOLED
VASE · CLAY
EX LIBRIS
JOHN BENSOLN
BOOK PLATE TO BE MECTOGRAPHED
STENCIL OR WOOD BLOCK
NOTICE
CLASS DAY
ROY HALL
ON
MONDAY
JUNE 15TH
COME
POSTER
HANDLE OF PAPER - KNIFE INCISED OR BURNED
CARD CASE - LEATHER

FIG. 7.

It is well to remember when a class "goes to pieces" in its efforts to devise originial designs that the chances are all in favor of the real shortcoming being chargeable, not to the pupils but to the teacher, who did not sufficiently guard the problem in its statement, but permitted so many opportunities for individual treatment that a multiplied series of errors became possible. The problem which proves too difficult is one in which there are more elements than the teacher can properly consider and review in the work presented for criticism. A limited field for the beginner does much to insure successful class-work. Illustration of the increasing part which the pupil may be permitted to play appears in the outline which follows.

EACH PROBLEM SHOULD DEVELOP THROUGH A SIMILAR SEQUENCE OF STEPS

No very sharp lines serve to distinguish any one series of problems from those which follow. In the general sequence offered, it has been the effort to illustrate several groups of problems, in which the same principles are presented in designs applied to a variety of forms. The problems within each group are about of equal difficulty. In developing a course of study, three or four examples from each group should be offered to the pupils before those of the succeeding group are attempted.

Especial attention is called to the fact that the world of applied design teems with examples of arrangements of masses perfectly suited to the purpose of the elementary teacher, if the latter but offer them in simple form, without the involved conventionalized matter of the originals. One on the outlook for good mass arrangements will find scores to supplement those shown in Figs. 4, 5, 6 and 7, many requiring little change to adapt them admirably to classroom use.

Group I. These problems (Fig. 4) offer (1) a given space (2) to be decorated by a given unit or series of units (3) arranged in a given manner and (4) requiring only modification of the outline of the unit or repeat.

The emphasis in these problems is to be placed on the change in the single side of the unit, which may be cut from folded paper, unfolded and traced as often as may be necessary. Many illustrations of good units should be offered to the pupils, each of whom should cut out several and choose the best for use.

Group II. These problems (Fig. 5) offer (1) a given space (2) to be decorated in a given manner, (3) requiring in the simpler problems that the mass be broken up without modification of outline, and in the more advanced, that the mass be individually modified as to size and placing, and as to width of connecting band, if such is to be used.

The emphasis in these problems should fall on the development of simplicity and strength in the lines which break up the mass. The principle of growth should be shown to underlie the good divisions of masses, and solutions showing twisted and uncertain dividing lines, and numerous and badly related elements should be deprecated.

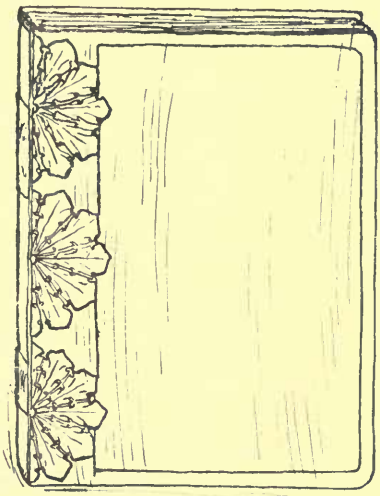


FIG. 8.

Group III. These problems (Fig. 6) offer (1) a space whose proportions are to be determined by the pupil, (2) the space to be decorated by masses individual as to size, outline and placing, (3) and broken up or developed in minor elements individually treated.

The effort in these problems should be to secure simplicity and dignity of treatment. In the case of each, the pupil's attention should be directed to the various masses which contribute to the design, and in criticism of his own design he should be called upon to review the relations of such masses to one another, in the terms of balance, rhythm, variety and unity. His attention must also be strongly drawn to the principles of structure. Hitherto the structural success of his designs has rested upon the teacher, who offered the masses ready for modification; now the pupil must seek to secure such structural quality for himself.

Group IV. These problems (Fig. 7) offer space similar to those in Group III, to be decorated by masses planned in individual fashion and developed into simple conventionalized forms.

Relations and structure are to be emphasized and efforts made to secure subject matter, individual in treatment and marked by subtle rhythms and fine proportions. The conventional elements will, for the most part, have to be developed from charts of natural forms, and some practice in adapting the natural forms to different spaces will be required, before the masses can be filled with success. In connection with these problems the laws of growth must be developed, and consideration given

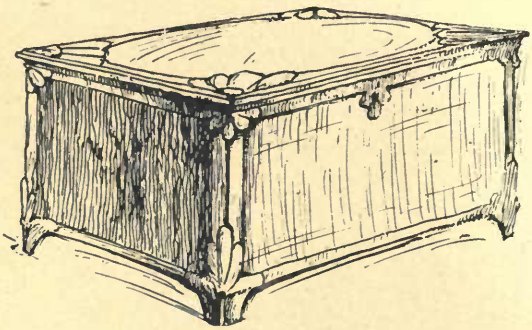


FIG. 9.

to the forms of conventional treatment suitable to the different materials (wood, textile, leather, metal) which present themselves for decoration.

The range of school work is completed in this group. Pupils who can successfully solve the more advanced exercises are possessed of principles having a wide range of application. They should to a reasonable degree, be prepared to analyze and state the excellencies and defects of any pattern placed before them. This power is well worth striving for, be the possessor's future station and occupation what it may.

METHODS IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Essential to the successful development of any given problem in the classroom is: (1) Adequate preparation by the teacher. (2) Appropriate illustrative material. (3) An analysis of the problem by the pupil, followed by its definite statement by the teacher. (4) Systematic development of the steps of the problem. (5) Critical review by the pupils.

ADEQUATE PREPARATION BY THE TEACHER

Adequate preparation by the teacher requires that he consider in detail the elements of the problem to be solved by his pupils. Upon him rests the determination of the propriety of the design in question. He must satisfy himself that the model to be decorated will have its beauty

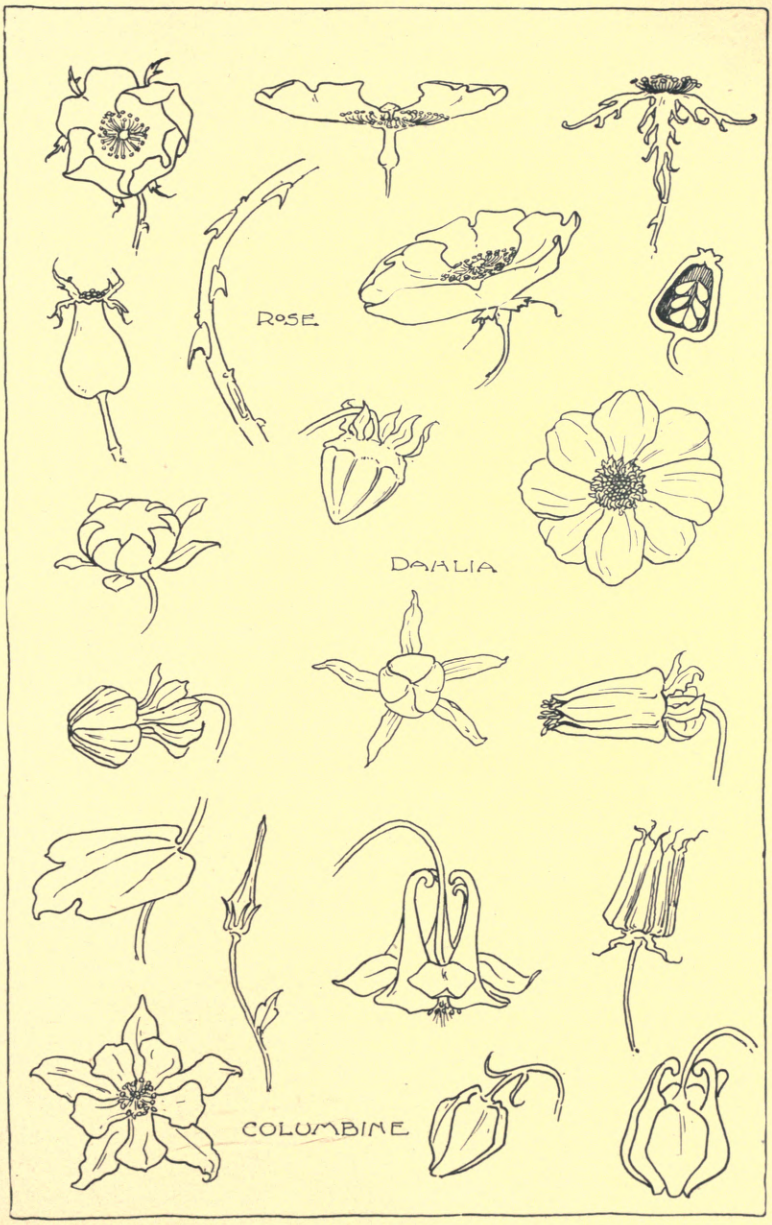


FIG. 10. DECORATIVE ELEMENTS FROM VARIOUS PLANTS

enhanced by the proposed decoration, and must settle upon the exact type of pattern which the pupil is to develop. If more than one scheme of decoration presents itself, it may be possible for him to have part of his class solve the problem in one way, while another part develops a different arrangement. As a rule it will not be wise to attempt more than two such variations.

FIG. 11. CONVENTIONAL ELEMENTS FROM FLOWERS AND SEED-PODS

Emphasis is to be laid upon the preliminary determination of the problem by the teacher. It is he who is responsible for the main elements of the pattern. It is his business to lead his pupils to make designs which are good in arrangement, and original only so far as his pupils are prepared to do original work. He should solve the problem himself, that he may learn the most satisfactory arrangement of masses and the manner in which they may be best developed. So doing he will have revealed to him, the difficulties his class will experience—difficulties which lie in those steps that call for original work. In the

simplest problems such difficulties are found in the modification of the masses, in the more difficult, they involve questions as to the size and placing of the masses, their development and conventional treatment. Through his own solution the teacher is prepared to prevent egregious errors of performance by his pupils.

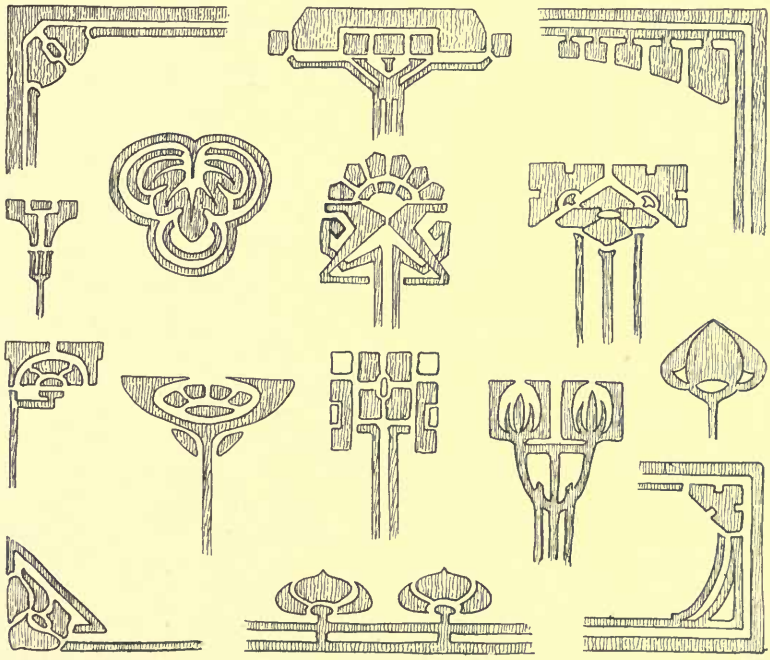


FIG. 12. FLOWER FORMS CONVENTIONALIZED AS SIMPLE MASS ARRANGEMENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

What is termed originalty in design is largely a matter of recombination. The professional designer has a broad background of experience and has recourse to examples from the hands of other artists. The child has a limited experience made up chiefly of recollections of bad examples which he has seen at home or in the shops. It is essential, therefore, that many well-chosen illustrations be placed before him, when he is called upon to work for himself.

Good illustrations are essential to good design. They not only offer technical suggestions but they establish standards of performance by which the child can judge his work. Without suitable illustrations he

solves his problem in the dark. By means of them he can be shown exactly what is wanted.

The illustrative matter offered should take three forms—charts, blackboard drawings, and examples of pupils' work. In the lower grades, the charts (made on good sized sheets of wrapping paper) should show various simple arrangements of masses, simply divided. They may be painted with ink or water-color, or drawn with colored chalks. In the upper grades, a variety of these illustrative sheets will prove of value. Some should offer drawings of plant forms and illustrations of growth and the details of flowers and leaves (see Fig. 10.); others should show conventional elements derived from such plants. (See Fig. 11.) Small hectographed reproductions of flower parts, mass arrangements, etc., will also prove useful. These should be on oak-tag that they may stand the wear and tear of constant handling by many pupils. (See Fig. 12.)

Still other charts, made by mounting illustrations on large sheets of cardboard, will be of service. These examples should be taken from the work of professional designers in art magazines, catalogues, advertising circulars and the like. The pupils themselves should be led to aid in making such charts, designs being solicited from them, which offer good illustrations of mass arrangements. Not only is the search for these of great value in developing the taste, but as they show the practical application of the principles of decoration, they cause the pupils to realize the importance of their study. (See Fig. 13.)

Blackboard illustration should be constant during the development of any problem. Those drawings to which it is desirable repeatedly to refer, should be made with colored chalk on large sheets of wrapping paper. The color is attractive, and the drawings, if carefully handled, may be saved from lesson to lesson. This, when a single problem in design carries over several lessons is of no small advantage.

Perhaps the most serviceable of all aids are good examples of pupils' work. These should be collected from term to term until the teacher has two or three score of them. They may readily be pinned up during the development of any lesson, and removed when actual work begins, that mere copying may be prevented. Later they may again be displayed, that the work of the class as a whole may be compared with the best results previously secured. (See Figs. 14 and 22.)

ANALYSIS AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Before the pupils take the first step in the development of any design, it should be studied in a general way. The pupils should be interested

FIG. 13. CHART AND PAMPHLET COVERS MADE BY PROFESSIONAL DESIGNERS

in the problem as a problem, led to see the propriety of the proposed decoration, and the nature of its service as an aid to the structure and beauty of the form decorated. The steps involved should be next considered in the order followed by the teacher in his own study.

The class should first be led to discover the mass or masses which will best serve the desired purpose, these being considered in the light

of structure, balance, rhythm, variety, unity. The masses decided upon, the pupils should next consider how they may best be broken up, and if conventional matter is to be used, the particular plant or flower which is best suited to the pattern. In the light of such study they should be prepared to understand exactly what the lesson includes, and to solve the problem when stated to them in definite and specific form, as—"Make a design for a book-cover measuring 5 x 9 inches, the design to consist of the word 'Notes,' and a square decorative unit beneath the title, etc."

Much advantage lies in this specific statement. By it the problem is taken out of the realm of the abstract and is made concrete, in terms with which the pupil is familiar. The professional designer always has a distinct problem before him; the beginner should see his own work as definite. The latter should never be directed to "make a design" without being completely informed as to the nature and purpose of the pattern. Through such statement he learns that every problem can be reduced to simple and definite form, and learns, too, that the questions he has to solve are identical in kind with those of the practiced designer.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was pointed out that, in his analysis of the problem, the pupil is to be led to discover certain steps as essential to the solution. These should be taken up seriatim.

1. *The planning of the masses.* The main masses should be decided on with careful attention to the structural qualities of the space decorated, the elements planned being seen to confirm structural relations. Simplicity is a virtue to be constantly referred to. If the design is at all a complex one, careful consideration should be given to the various spaces created in the background of the pattern. The background it is to be remembered always forms a part of the design, and should receive as much attention as the decorative elements placed upon it.

To assist the pupil to realize how far small changes in the mass arrangement effect the design, it will at times be found convenient to cut out of paper, two or three of the chief elements of the pattern. These may be placed on the space to be decorated and moved about until satisfactory relations of background and pattern are established. If the masses thus planned are not right in size or shape, others may be made. When the best arrangement has been decided upon, a pencil may be run around the edges of the paper templates, and the pupil led to consider the next step in his work.

FIG. 14. EXAMPLES OF PUPILS' WORK—5TH TO 8TH YEAR

Some cautions are to be noted in regard to the planning of the pattern. As a general rule the design should not crowd the edge of the space decorated. If there is a panel within, such as occurs in box-top or similar designs, greater color unity will result if the tone of the panel is repeated in a narrow mass surrounding the entire design. (See Fig. 15.) A similar margin will lend to the effectiveness of nearly all patterns; its value lies chiefly in the fact that it emphasizes the outline and so lends to the structure of the space decorated.

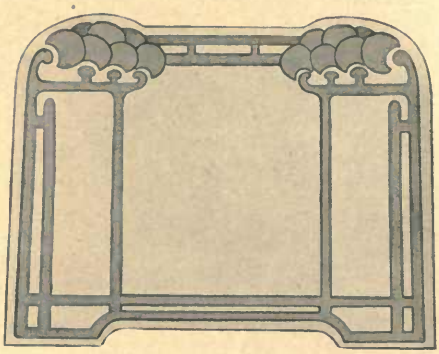


FIG. 15. RACK-END DESIGNED BY 8TH YEAR PUPIL

It is surprising to what extent strength of structure may be altered by lines which are allowed to impinge on the border of an enclosing space. Fig. 16 shows a rectangle which has its squareness entirely destroyed (in a) by a curve which draws in the sides, and (in b) by radial lines which contract the corners. The dotted lines show the direction in which the sides appear distorted. The third figure (c) has had the squareness of the form strengthened by the small masses which support the corners. The angles of this and similar forms, are structurally their most important elements.

In general the development of very large masses is to be deprecated, as is the development of large elements connected by very slender straps, or large straps connecting masses which are insignificant. Also to be avoided is the creation of strap or leaf-like forms which do not follow and support the lines of the main space, but introduce a number of curved lines, which draw the eye out of the enclosing boundary. Such elements, common enough in pupils' designs, destroy the strength of the enclosing line and weaken the entire pattern. (See Fig. 17 a.)

Of the various devices for expediting class work, two or three may be mentioned. The first looks to the development of the symmetrical halves of a pattern having masses with subtlely drawn curves. Such symmetry may be secured by folding the paper on which the trial drawing is to be made, and indicating the general outline on either side of the fold. After the main masses have been planned and very carefully drawn on one half of the pattern, the latter may be folded on the mid-

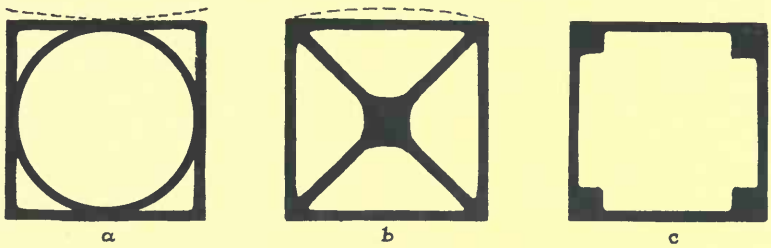


FIG. 16. STRUCTURE OF SQUARE AS AFFECTED BY THE LINES WITHIN IT

crease, and a reproduction of the mass arrangement made by rubbing. The design for a square or oblong may similiarly be made by creasing the paper at right angles and developing one quarter of the pattern, which may be transferred by rubbing to the other corners. (See Fig. 23.)

Decorated units, especially the simple forms of the lower grades, may also be made by folding and cutting. The tablets thus devised will serve as templates and may be traced as frequently as desired.

2. *The development of the masses.* In the development of the masses the teacher should have constant recourse to the blackboard, the pupils also being called upon to illustrate their understanding of the problem by sketches made before their fellows.

Particularly should the advantage of a growth point be emphasized in the development of each mass. Radial growth it will be well to have developed from a definite mass and not from a mere point. The latter lacks the strength of the former. (See Fig. 18.) The necessity of having but two or three leading lines, and of securing rhythm, variety and unity in the forms created must be strongly brought to the attention of the pupils.*

The chief cautions to be observed are, the avoidance of contrary motion in the patterns, the avoidance of small elements and of explosive

*See article on Applied Design, Manual Training Magazine, Oct. 1905.

movements caused by too many radial lines. Also to be deprecated are the weak and uncertain lines, adversely criticized in a foregoing paragraph. The pupils must learn that every line in a design shonld have a definite function and definite movement, and that no "feebly flapping" element, born of a line which does not know where it is going, is to be

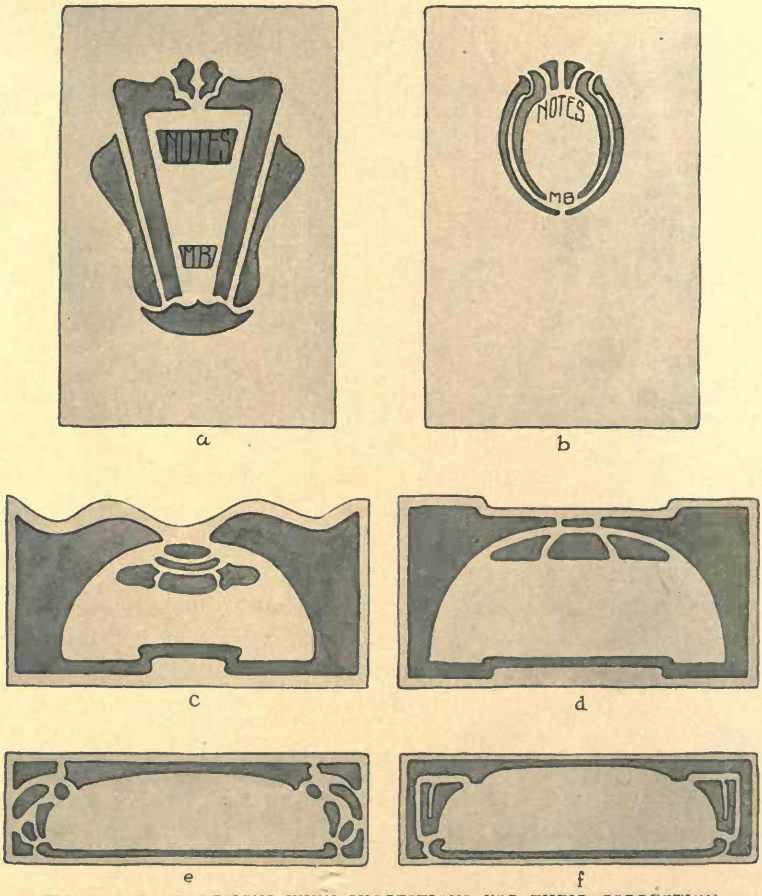


FIG. 17. POOR DESIGNS WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR CORRECTION

tolerated. When the young designers come to separate the minor elements, one from another, they are also to be cautioned not to open wide spaces between them. Should they do so the strength of the original masses will be destroyed. (See Fig. 17 e.)

At this stage of the pattern it will be well for the pupils critically to review their work. The best of the examples should be shown and commended for excellencies of structure, growth, rhythm, consistency of elements, etc.; the poorer should also be examined that the cause of their failure may be determined. After such review, the pupils should be required to refine their patterns, making commonplace curves more subtle, perfecting rhythms and strengthening weak points in structure.

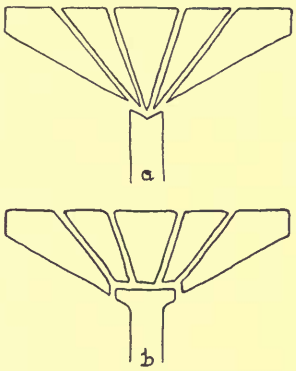


FIG. 18.

3. *Introduction of subject matter.* Anything like a thorough study of conventionalization cannot be taken up in the elementary school nor in the high school unless unusual time offers for its teaching. The elementary teacher will, therefore, be wise if he attempts to secure little beyond the individual adaption of conventional elements to the masses of the pattern already devised. The elements referred to should be offered in the form of charts. The source of the various forms should be explained, but it is not necessary, nor is it often possible for the pupil to develop elements directly from natural forms. If he adapt well the forms offered him, there will be abundant cause for congratulation.

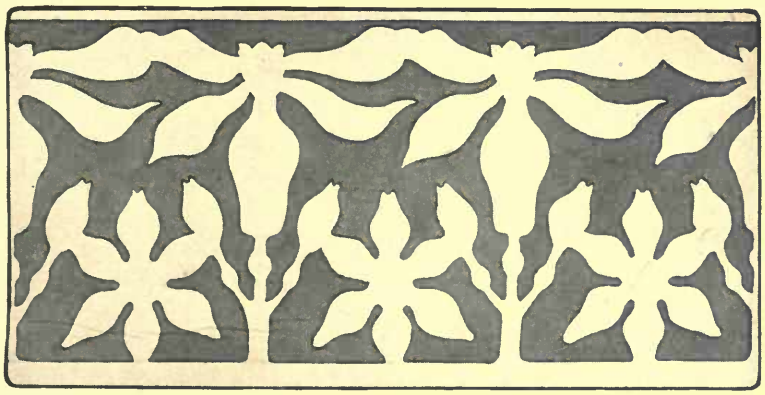
Before the worker is called upon to use such conventional elements, it will be well that he have some practice in shaping them to various spaces. This practice may be given by having him make a number of units with brush strokes, using the motifs offered combined in various ways to make flower forms resembling those shown him by the teacher. (See Fig. 19.) Some little practice in this way will enable him to make a sheet or two of original elements very similar to those shown on the charts. He may then proceed with promises of success, to the development of similiar forms in the masses of his design.

In adapting the subject matter to his pattern the pupil should be reminded to suit the character of the element to the peculiar nature of the design in hand. The more rigid and formal the pattern, the more formal should be the conventionalized material. This desired formality can be secured by the use of right lines and square angles in the place of curves and rounded forms. (See Fig. 15.)

FIG. 19. PRACTICE UNITS MADE WITH BRUSH

The devices used by skilled workers to simplify patterns containing subject matter, can only be learned by a study of a large number of professional designs. Two, however, may be mentioned as particularly helpful. The first is the agglutination of details which overlap or impinge upon one another. (See Fig. 20.) This produces what is virtually a motif in silhouette. The second is the surrounding by a strong outline, of those particular masses which play an important part in the rhythm of the pattern. (See Fig. 21.) When circumspectly applied, this outline will materially strengthen a confused and unsatisfactory design.

The use of motifs particularly related to the form decorated, or to the designers themselves, is to be commended. This gives to the subject mat-



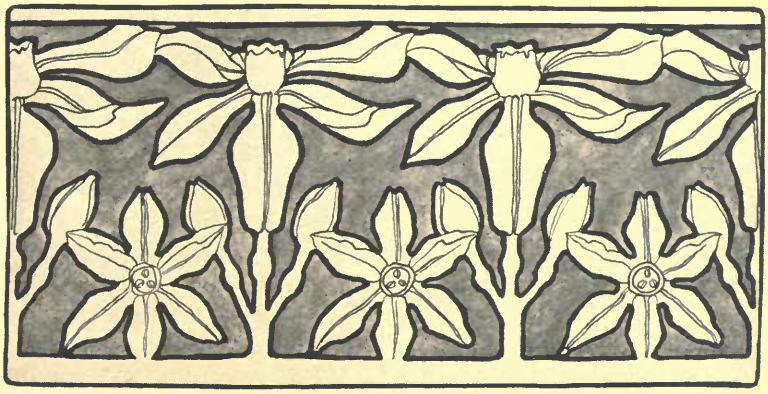


FIG. 20. AGGLUTINATION OF ELEMENTS OF SUBJECT MATTER

FIG. 21. PATTERN SHOWING USE OF FINE LINES FOR DETAILS AND STRONG LINES FOR MASSES

ter a symbolic significance Such practice, will for example employ Indian motifs in a design for a note-book on Indian life and legends, or loaves and fishes for a collection of receipts made in the school kitchen. The wide application of symbolism cannot be discussed here, but class teachers will find it lends an added interest to all work in which it enters. It

contains the hint of hidden meaning, and the suggestion of the personal —very attractive to the youthful worker. Symbolic elements associated with the school may be devised and adapted to this end. These may include the school flower, the school pin, banner or favorite tree. For the most part, the skilled utilization of this material must be left to the older pupils.

TRACING

When the design has been completed by repeated correction, it will have to be traced upon the form to which it is to be applied. Various devices offer here. If it has been made with a moderately soft pencil and presents sharp clear outlines, a satisfactory rubbing may often be made upon paper, wood, or any light colored and smooth surface. If this is impossible, the black may be blackened with a soft pencil, and the tracing made with a hard sharp-pointed one, or tracing paper may be used as purchased, or as manufactured of thin wrapping paper which has been given a coat of stove polish. The latter paper is easily prepared, costs but a trifle, and forms a satisfactory subistute for the commercial article.

CLASS CRITICISM

During the development of any pattern the pupils shonld be repeatedly called upon to criticise their work. So far as possible, this should be a class exercise, the examples being placed where all may see them. It is important that this critical review be undertaken: first after the masses have been developed, and again after the subject matter has been introduced.

The steps of the criticism should be systematic, the pupils being called upon to examine the work from the standpoint of structure, balance, rhythm, variety and unity. It is not enough for those who criticise to say that they do not like this or that element in the design. They should state their reasons, and indicate the principles that have been violated and the manner in which the correction is to be effected. They should, in other words, criticise in terms of design.

It is impossible to note all the forms of error which may be present in the work of a class, but two or three examples may be suggestive as to types of mistakes and their correction.

Fig. 17 a shows a decorated unit designed for a book-cover. This is poor in structure, its outline weakening the enclosing oblong. It is far too large a unit, and the title which it presents appears relatively unimportant.

No minor change can make this into a satisfactory form. Correction may perhaps best be effected (see b) by reducing the size of the unit, by strengthening the boundary line (developing it as one smooth flowing curve), dropping the lowermost element altogether (fusing it with the bounding mass), rhythmically relating the space with the initials to the nearby elements, and simplifying the smaller masses shown above. Finally, the word "Notes" may be made to play a definite and important part in the design. Thus while the original idea has been retained the design as a design is improved. The improvement, however, has necessitated complete redrawing.

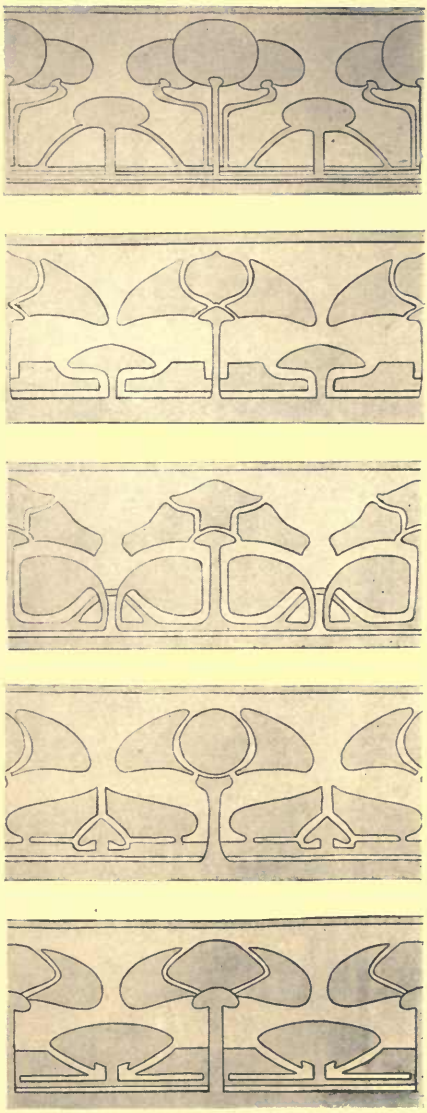


FIG. 22. BORDERS FOR PIANO COVERS, DESIGNED BY 8TH YEAR PUPILS.

Fig. 17 c shows a design which requires less change. The mass arrangement is here well placed but too large and uncertain in its inner line, the enclosing panel being poor in shape. The latter is also weakened by the hanging unit above, which is not well related to the general mass.

Correction is to be effected (see d) by reducing the size of the mass, strengthening the inner line into one decided movement and simplifying the panel by the inclusion of the hanging unit in the mass of the pattern.

Fig. 17 e shows a pattern in which the mass arrangement has been

well planned, but one in which the pupil has failed to develop the details properly. The minor elements have the appearance of being simply drawn over the original mass and not developed by tenative lines of division. Rhythm is lacking in the elements and contrary movements appear; there are too many small parts and growth is not well main-

FIG. 23. A COMMUNAL EXERCISE – PIANO COVER DESIGNED BY A GROUP OF 8TH YEAR PUPILS.

tained. The separate elements are also so far apart that they have a scattered appearance. Variety has been secured, but improperly secured at the expense of unity.

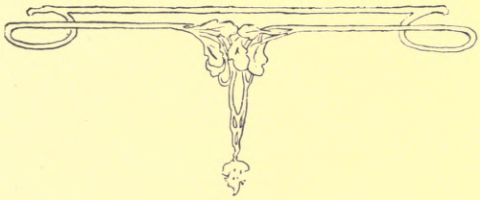
This design is to be corrected (see f) by uniting the smaller elements with the larger, by reducing their number and establishing a definite movement of growth from the ends of the lower strap of the pattern. The original mass arrangement is left unchanged, but the minor elements are welded and have the lines between them refined in curvature. This form of error will be apt to appear in any case where a class teacher has carefully supervised the planning of the decorative mass, but has not led his pupils by definite steps to its development.

SUMMARY

In the foregoing discussion two general principles appear as essential to the success of the teacher who essays to teach design, the first that, he know exactly what he wants to do, the second, that he bring his pupils to know what he wishes them to do. The one requires analysis of every pattern before it is presented, the other can be insured by developing each problem step by step, remembering always the abiding merit of good

example. So led, the pupil can be made to assume greater responsibility in each new lesson. If at any time he fails to do right, it will be, nine cases in ten, because he does not know what is right.

Some may be prepared to cavil at so slow procedure along the path which leads to the doing of original work without let or hindrance, but the advantage of the method appears when a class so instructed is required to devise, unaided, decorations for forms which are new to them. It should be the practice to give such "test problems" from time to time, to the more advanced pupils. The results secured should be criticized in the same manner as the other class-work. Experience has shown that when these tests are given to pupils taught as suggested, they reveal a power to devise commendable decorations, far in advance of pupils instructed on "free" lines. After all, the proof of every pudding lies in its eating.



University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 038 635 9

niver
Sout
Libr